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Department of Defense DIRECTIVE

August 29, 1995
NUMBER 5040.5

ATSD(PA)

SUBJECT: Alteration of Official DoD Imagery

Reference: (a) Deputy Secretary of Defense Policy Memorandum,
"Alteration of Official Photographic and Video
Imagery," December 9, 1994 (hereby canceled)

A. PURPOSE

This Directive:

1. Supersedes reference (a).
2. Establishes policy and assigns responsibilities to ensure the absolute credibility of official DoD imagery in and outside the Department of Defense.

B. APPLICABILITY AND SCOPE

This Directive:

1. Applies to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the Military Departments, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, and the DoD Field Activities (hereafter referred to collectively as "the DoD Components").
2. Shall be consistent with the national security responsibilities of the Secretary of Defense.

C. DEFINITION

Official DoD Imagery. All photographic and video images, regardless of the medium in which they are acquired, stored, or displayed, that are recorded or produced by persons acting for or on behalf of DoD activities, functions, or missions.

D. POLICY

It is DoD policy that:

1. Official DoD imagery is an essential tool of decision-makers at every DoD level.

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2. Mission success and the protection of lives and property depend on official DoD imagery being complete, timely, and above all, highly accurate.

3. Anything that weakens or casts doubt on the credibility of official DoD imagery in or outside the Department of Defense shall not be tolerated.

4. The alteration of official DoD imagery by persons acting for or on behalf of the Department of Defense is prohibited, except as follows:

a. Photographic techniques common to traditional darkrooms and digital imaging stations such as dodging, burning, color balancing, spotting, and contrast adjustment that are used to achieve the accurate recording of an event or object are not considered alterations.

b. Photographic and video image enhancement, exploitation, and simulation techniques used in support of unique cartography; topography; engineering; geodesy; intelligence; criminal investigation; medical; research, development, test & evaluation; scientific; and training requirements are authorized if they do not misrepresent the subject of the original image.

c. The obvious masking of portions of a photographic image in support of specific security, criminal investigation, privacy, or legal requirements is authorized.

d. The use of cropping, editing, or enlargement to selectively isolate, link, or display a portion of a photographic or video image is not considered alteration. Cropping, editing, or image enlargement that has the effect of misrepresenting the facts or circumstances of the event or object as originally recorded is prohibited.

e. The digital conversion and compression of official DoD imagery is authorized.

f. Photographic and video post-production enhancement, including animation, digital simulation, graphics, and special effects, used for dramatic or narrative effect in education, recruiting, safety and training illustrations, publications, or productions is authorized under either of the conditions in subparagraph D.4.f.(1) or D.4.f.(2), below.

(1) The enhancement does not misrepresent the subject of the original image; or,

(2) It is clearly and readily apparent from the context or from the content of the image or accompanying text that the enhanced image is not intended to be an accurate representation of any actual event.

E. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs shall:

a. In coordination with the other OSD Principal Staff Assistants, provide oversight policy and guidance to ensure the absolute credibility of official DoD imagery.

b. Monitor compliance of this Directive.

c. Ensure compliance with this Directive for those activities in their purview.

2. The Other OSD Principal Staff Assistants shall:

a. Maintain liaison with the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs in maintaining oversight policy and guidance to ensure the absolute credibility of official DoD imagery.

b. Ensure compliance with this Directive for those activities in their purview.

3. The Heads of the DoD Components shall ensure compliance with this Directive for those activities in their purview.

F. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Directive is effective immediately.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John P. White', is written over a large, stylized 'X' mark.

John P. White
Deputy Secretary of Defense